

Message Text

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17

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 AGR-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 FRB-03 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05 CIEP-01 SS-15 STR-04 TAR-01

TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01 FEA-01 /088 W

----- 001244

R 070955Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4267

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, PFOR, SN, ASEAN

SUBJECT: ASEAN

REF: STATE 232607

1. DURING JANUARY 6 CALL ON MINISTER FOR FINANCE HON SUI SEN TO DELIVER LETTER FROM SPECIAL TRADE REPRESENTATIVE DENT ON GSP, AMBASSADOR TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE POINTS IN REFTEL, SPECIFICALLY, THAT USG IS PREPARED TO ENTER INTO A DIALOGUE WITH ASEAN; THAT WE ARE FLEXIBLE AS REGARDS THE AGENDA AND FORMAT OF SUCH CONSULTATIONS AS WELL AS THE INITIATIVE FOR SUCH TALKS; AND, THAT WE ENVISAGE COMPREHENSIVE CONSULTATIONS INCLUDING TRADE AND RELATED ISSUES. AMBASSADOR ALSO SAID WE WOULD BE WILLING TO DISCUSS OUR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN THE REGION BUT STRESSED THAT WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO MAKE AN AID COMMITMENT AS A PRE-CONDITION FOR CONSULTATIVE TALKS.

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2. HON SAID THAT SUBJECT OF ASEAN/USG CONSULTATIONS HAD BEEN RAISED AT MEETING OF ECONOMIC AND PLANNING MINISTERS IN JAKARTA ON NOVEMBER 26-27 AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT SUCH TALKS COULD BE USEFUL. HE ADDED THAT A MOVE TO INITIATE A DIALOGUE WOULD NOT OCCUR UNTIL AFTER THE ASEAN SUMMIT.

3. PROBABLY REFLECTING HIS RECOLLECTIONS OF THE JAKARTA MEETING, HON STATED THAT THE PROCESS OF BUILDING ASEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION WOULD BE DIFFICULT AND LENGTHY. HE OBSERVED THAT SOME MINOR PROGRESS HAD BEEN ACHIEVED, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS TRADE IN FERTILIZER AND FOOD-STUFFS, BUT OBSERVED THAT SINGAPORE'S AND PHILIPPINES' DESIRE TO MOVE QUICKLY TO A FREE TRADE AREA IS BEING STOUTLY RESISTED BY INDONESIA, AND THAT MALAYSIA'S AND THAILAND'S VIEWS ON SUBJECT ARE AT BEST AMBIVALENT. MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER, HON DEPLORED THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS, ASSERTING THAT SINGAPORE COULD NOT PUSH HARDER THAN IT IS ALREADY DOING SINCE IS IS OBVIOUS TO ALL THAT SINGAPORE WOULD BE A PRIME BENEFICIARY OF ANY TRADE LIBERALIZATION SCHEME INSTITUTED. ACCORDING TO HON, SINGAPORE WOULD, INDEED, BE PREPARED TO GO BEYOND A FREE TRADE AREA AND INTO A FULL CUSTOMS UNION. HOWEVER, SINGAPORE ACCEPTED THE REALITIES AND, IF INDONESIA IS RELUCTANT TO ENTER VOLUNTARILY INTO A MARRIAGE CONTRACT, THEN CERTAINLY THERE IS NO ONE IN REGION TO ARRANGE A SHOTGUN WEDDING.

4. IN LATTER CONNECTION, HON OBSERVED, FACETIOUSLY WE ASSUME, THAT PERHAPS THE US AS AN OUTSIDE PARTY COULD PROVIDE THE PRESSURE OR AN INDUCEMENT (READ "AID") TO ASSIST MOVEMENT TOWARD GREATER REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION. IN CONCLUDING DISCUSSION OF ASEAN, HON INDICATED THAT IN GOS VIEW PROGRESS IN ECONOMIC AND SECURITY SPHERES (LATTER OF WHICH IS OF MAJOR CONCERN TO INDONESIANS) WAS NOT SEPARABLE BUT WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE IN TANDEM.

5. HON'S REACTION TO DENT LETTER ON GSP AND TO US CUSTOMS REGULATIONS RELATING TO SINGAPORE'S ENTREPOT

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TRADE BEING SENT SEPTEL.
HOLDRIDGE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
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